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ABSTRACT

This report presents a survey of students 15 years and older who left Northern Territory (Australia) urban and Aboriginal secondary schools during 1988. The Northern Territory Department of Education and various institutions provided information on the background and destination of these students. It was possible to find information relating to only 63% of all students leaving urban schools, while it proved impossible to find a definitive figure for the number of students who left Aboriginal schools. The study indicates the following: (1) 2,559 students left urban schools in 1988; (2) 53% were students who were in their last year of school, 19% left school during or at the end of grade 10, 22% left during or at the end of grade 11, and 6% left before grade 10; (3) employment was the prime destination for the majority of urban school leavers, with further study being the second most frequent destination; (4) 40% of Aboriginal school leavers were employed under the Community Development Employment Program, with 38% taking up full-time employment; and (5) 81% of Aboriginal students who were not in full-time postsecondary education were unemployed. This study suggests areas of possible intervention including career counseling beginning in grade 8 and establishing more training opportunities for girls. This report contains numerous graphs and tables illustrating survey results. (LP)

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Report 1/1991

Where Did They Go?

NORTHERN TERRITORY 1988 SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS

Northern Territory Department of Education
Darwin 1991

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Project Team
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BACKGROUND

The creation of the Chief Minister's Task-Force for the Education of Girls in the Northern Territory in 1986 prompted discussions between the representatives of industry, employer and employee groups and those departments of the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments which were involved with education, career education and counselling, training and employment.

Due to the structure of the NT economy, which has a relatively large public service sector and little industry, it was recognised that opportunities for school leavers were probably quite different from those for youth in other major cities and states and that the encouragement of employment opportunities and the development of local initiatives might require approaches unique to the Northern Territory.

In 1987, the NT Department of Education and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) organised a cooperative project to investigate the occupational and educational destinations of 1986 school leavers. That survey was limited in that not all school leavers were included.

Early in 1989, it was proposed that a survey of all 1988 school leavers be conducted during Semester One 1989 in cooperation with DEET and the Department of Labour and Administrative Services (DOLAS). This study was intended to include all those students, such as pre-Year 11 and non-urban school leavers, omitted from the earlier report. The project was undertaken by a special projects officer between October 1989 and March 1990.

AIMS

The original aims of the study were to:

- provide a database of the occupational, educational or other destinations of Northern Territory students who left secondary education during 1988
- examine the reasons why such students chose a particular destination
- identify possible areas in education, employment and training where intervention might be appropriate
- indicate further areas of research
- provide a comparative framework for other studies, then in operation, conducted under the Participation and Equity Programme (PEP) such as Student Choices, Options and Pathways of Education (SCOPE) which examined NT school leavers' intended educational, employment and training destinations.

For reasons outlined below, it was not possible to achieve these aims in full.

METHODOLOGY

Outline of the Proposed Study

It was originally intended to use existing databases to provide a list of students who were enrolled in Year 10, 11 or 12 in 1988, but not in 1989. This list was to be circulated to DOLAS, DEET, Northern Territory University (NTU), Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Industry Training Councils (ITC), Northern Territory Public Service Commission Office (NT PSCO), Scholarship Committees and major employers requesting information on school leavers who were involved in employment, further education or other schemes under their control. It was estimated that approximately 70% of the 1988 school leaver population would be accounted for in this way. However, if this proved not to be the case, it was intended to write to school leavers for whom there was no information.

It was also proposed to contact high schools, Community Education Centres (CECs) and Aboriginal schools requesting information about former students who did not reply to this letter and all pre-Year 10 and Post Primary school leavers. It was thought that visits to high schools, Aboriginal schools and communities might produce further information. It was estimated that these strategies would produce information about more than 90% of the 1988 school leaver population.

The above approach was not implemented for the following reasons:

- with the number of students involved (approximately 2500), it was considered to be an imposition to ask any department or employer to go through their staff lists to identify and give information on individual school leavers [1]

- lack of funding for clerical assistance, the cost of postage (approximately $1800 for pre-paid responses), the time involved in waiting for replies and the well attested fact that requests for such data are generally ignored made it impractical to attempt to locate the students by letter

- funds were only available for visits to selected urban centres and it would not have been cost-effective to visit isolated Aboriginal schools and communities.

Method Used

A modified version of the methodology used in the 1987 study was adopted. The present study intended to provide information on the destinations of students within the Northern Territory who were of school leaving age, or above, at the beginning of 1988 or who reached that age during the year. Information on this group of students was sought from the following sources:

- Northern Territory Department of Education
- NT secondary schools and colleges
- Northern Territory University
- TAFE institutions

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[1] The NTU was asked to do so, but preferred to provide a list of those claiming to have left school in 1988.

- NT secondary schools and colleges
- Employment and Training Division, Department of Labour and Administrative Services
- Community College of Central Australia
- Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) Offices
- Department of Employment, Education and Training
- telephone interviews with 1988 school leavers
- a telephone survey of major employers
- check of 1989 electoral rolls for the Northern Territory.

Survey Population of the 1987 Study

For the purposes of the 1987 study, senior school leavers were defined as:

> *those students who, having completed either Year 11 or Year 12 studies at one of thirteen schools or colleges in the Northern Territory, had indicated their intention to leave secondary education and thus had received a Northern Territory Board of Studies Senior Secondary Studies Certificate.*

The schools involved in this study were:

Alice Springs High School
Casuarina Secondary College
Darwin High School
Dripstone High School
Katherine High School
Marrara Christian School
Nhulunbuy High School
Nightcliff High School
NT Secondary Correspondence School
Sadadeen Secondary College
St John's College
Taminmin High School
Tennant Creek High School

The 1987 survey did not include Year 10 students who had received a Northern Territory Board of Studies Junior Secondary Studies Certificate or students from Aboriginal schools. Students in the Northern Territory are able to leave school on their fifteenth birthday, and the 1987 study omitted students who had left without completing their studies in Years 8, 9 and 10. The 1987 survey, therefore, concentrated on students who had stayed at school and achieved some success within the education system and therefore might be more likely to obtain a place in the workforce or in tertiary education. It omitted those for whom academic success was not a high priority or was not achieved, and for whom therefore, occupational or further education opportunities would possibly be more limited.

Survey Population of the 1988 Study

For the purposes of this study, school leavers were defined as:

> *students of NT high schools, colleges and the NT Correspondence School who were of school leaving age in 1988, regardless of their final year level.*

Students enrolled at Casuarina Night School were omitted because the majority of these were studying part time. Where possible, Aboriginal schools were included in the study.
Where students indicated in December their intention of returning to school in January, they were enrolled as of the first day of term. If they did not arrive on that day, they were deemed to

have left on the first day of the school year. Thus, it was possible to determine which students intended to return to school at the beginning of 1988, but did not do so. However, schools varied in their application of this policy. For the purposes of this study, all students with an 'off-roll' date during January were deemed to have left school in December 1987.

TABLE 1 - NT STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED FOR JANUARY 1988 BUT WHO DID NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL (URBAN SCHOOLS)

GEN	YR12	YR11	YR10	YR9	YR8	TOTAL
M	33	14	9	4	2	62
F	23	12	10	4	0	49
TOT	56	26	19	8	2	111

Similarly, all students registered to return to school in January 1989, but who were 'off-roll' by the end of January 1989, were deemed to have been December 1988 school leavers.

Database of School Leavers

The Northern Territory Department of Education provided the names and relevant details of students in Years 8 to 12 who were either of school leaving age or above at the beginning of 1988 or who attained the age of fifteen that year, and who were enrolled in the following schools at the beginning of 1988 or at any time during that year:

Alice Springs High School
Anzac Hill High School
Casuarina Secondary College
Casuarina Secondary College (evening)
Darwin High School
Driver High School
Katherine High School
Nhulunbuy High School
Nightcliff High School
Sadadeen High School
Taminmin High School
Tennant Creek High School

The NT Department of Education had only the names and relevant details for students in Years 10 to 12 of these schools. However the schools were able to provide the necessary information for students in other years who were of school leaving age, or above, by the beginning of 1988, or who attained that age during that year.

The NT Department of Education Statistics Unit provided only the enrolment figures for Aboriginal students. These are compiled from data submitted to the Department annually.

Database Organisation

Data were collected and collated within the categories described below. It was decided that these would offer the essential details of the school leaver population and would enable patterns to be examined.

- Personal details
  - Sex
  - Date of birth

- School Details
  - High school / Secondary college of completion
  - Final year of completion within NT education

- Further Study
  - College or university for tertiary study
  - Tertiary course of study
  - Return to high school

- Employment / Occupation
  - Full-time paid employment
  - Apprentices
  - Other occupational training schemes
  - Industry category of employment

- Other categories including:
  - unemployment
  - overseas
  - interstate
  - social e.g. married

- Unknown
  - those students who had a telephone contact, but not contactable
  - students' families residing in the NT, but not on the telephone
  - students with post office box addresses and no telephone number
  - students' families not residing at the contact address
  - students' families not registered on the electoral roll.

For the purposes of the study, the data were arranged in two main areas: urban schools, divided according to geographic location, and Aboriginal schools.

Urban Secondary Schools

DARWIN

Casuarina	Kormilda College	Sanderson
Darwin	Marrara Christian	St John's College
Dripstone	Nightcliff	Taminmin
Driver	O'Loughlin Catholic College	

OTHER

Alice Springs	Jabiru Area	NT Secondary Correspondence
Anzac Hill	Tennant Creek	Catholic High School
Alyangula Area	Katherine	Sadadeen
Batchelor Area	Nhulunbuy	

Aboriginal Schools

All Aboriginal schools were invited to participate. Only the schools listed below took advantage of that invitation.

Oenpelli	Mt Allen	Hermansburg
Barunga	OLSH Wadeye	Umbakumba
Elliott	St Francis Xavier	Yirrkala
Milingimbi	St Therese's	

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was guaranteed in the following way:

- all written materials provided by external agencies were shredded after the information had been entered on the database
- all personal details relating to a student were deleted from the database after information regarding occupational or educational destinations had been processed
- where the supply of data involved personal student details or other records, confirmation was supplied by the Northern Territory Department of Education that this would be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for the purposes of this study
- written and personal assurances provided to respondents indicated that no individual would be identified by name within the study, and that the information supplied would be employed only in respect of this study on school leaver destinations.

NT Department of Education Database

The information provided by the NT Department of Education contained the following:

Student identity number
Student's name
Student's postal address
Identity number of school last attended
Year level on leaving school
Last enrolment date
Leaving date
All previous school identity numbers, year levels, enrolment and leaving dates.

In relation to those who stayed at school, and those who left school, the database supplied by the NT Department of Education appeared to have some discrepancies. These discrepancies are outlined below along with other difficulties with the research.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A number of difficulties was encountered during the course of this survey. It was not possible to overcome these within the time constraints placed upon the project. These difficulties are outlined below in order to provide information about the limitations of the data used.

The Original Database

- Some students who were contacted were still at school while others had left school some years earlier. It was not possible to ascertain how many students who were listed as still attending school had, in fact, left.

- The original data did not include telephone numbers.

- Many students from the rural areas gave only post box numbers.

- Due to some rather unusual family structures within the Northern Territory, the name under which a student was registered at school was sometimes different from that of the people with whom he or she was living. Therefore, it was impossible to locate such students through the telephone directory or the electoral roll.

- The original database proved to be inaccurate. Since these inaccuracies did not relate to school leavers, but to those remaining at school, the problem did not surface until late in the proceedings. The revised database had to be reproduced at a later stage in the program, and proved to bear little resemblance to the original data.

Data from the schools

- Information obtained from the schools regarding their school leavers' destinations was extremely limited and, in general, based on secondary sources.

- Attendance patterns of Aboriginal students and the resultant difficulties in keeping records in Aboriginal schools meant data from these schools was not very comprehensive.

- Some Aboriginal schools participated but others chose to provide no information. Therefore the figures for Aboriginal schools cannot provide substantial evidence about the destinations of school leavers.

Commonwealth Employment Service

- Since unemployment benefits are no longer payable to those under eighteen, there is no incentive for students to register for work at a CES office. Katherine seems to be representative of the situation throughout the NT, where approximately 40% of 1988 school leavers registered at the CES.

- At the end of a year the CES destroys all files for those with whom no contact has been made for six months. Thus, the CES had no information on any student who had not made contact since October 1988.

- Information held by the CES did not always represent either the leaver's intended or final occupation.

Tertiary Institutions

- There is no central register of the names of students registering for TAFE courses. Therefore, information regarding students participating in such courses could only be obtained from the students or those schools which had such information.

- The NTU provided the names of students who stated on their enrolment form that they had left school in 1988. However, the list contained numbers of NT students who did not appear on the leavers' database, while some students who were contacted said that they were, in fact, enrolled at the NTU.

- The data provided by the NTU also carried the caveat that, while numbers of students enrolled for courses, many did not take up these places and many more dropped out during the first semester.

Other Difficulties with the Survey

- The delay in starting the project meant that in some instances students had left school nearly twenty months previously. Many students had moved or left the Territory during this time and proved impossible to trace.

- The time line of four months to complete the project proved impractical to work within. Apart from difficulties with the original database, there were delays receiving information from external agencies.

Conclusion

Reliable evidence was obtainable only from direct contact with the students themselves.

SURVEY POPULATION

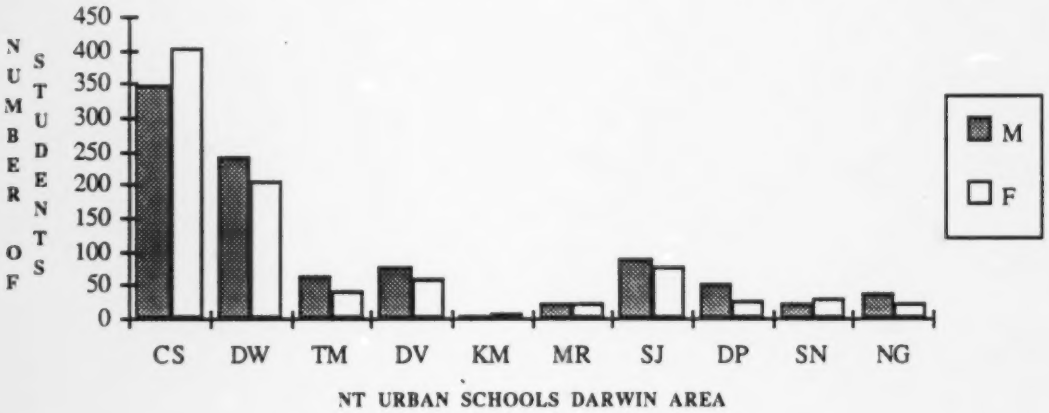
The population surveyed in this study was all students who had reached the school leaving age of 15 before or during 1988. This figure included all students enrolled during 1988. A further 113 students had indicated their intention of returning to school in 1988 but failed to do so (see Table 1, p5). 2559 students left school in 1988. Tables 1, 2 and 3 illustrate these figures.

TABLE 2 - DARWIN AREA URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS 1988 (by school & gender)

YRS	11-12	8 TO 12						8 TO 10				
GEN	CS	DW	TM	DV	KM	MR	SJ	DP	SN	NG	TOT	%
M	346	242	61	76	2	22	87	50	20	35	941	52
F	404	203	40	57	7	23	77	25	28	22	886	48
TOT	750	445	101	133	9	45	164	75	48	57	1827	100
%	41	25	6	7	0	2	9	4	3	3	100	

Casuarina	CS	Kormilda College	KM	Sanderson	SN
Darwin	DW	Marrara Christian	MR	St John's College	SJ
Dripstone	DP	Nightcliff	NG	Taminmin	TM
Driver	DV				

FIGURE 1 - DARWIN AREA URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS 1988 (by school & gender)



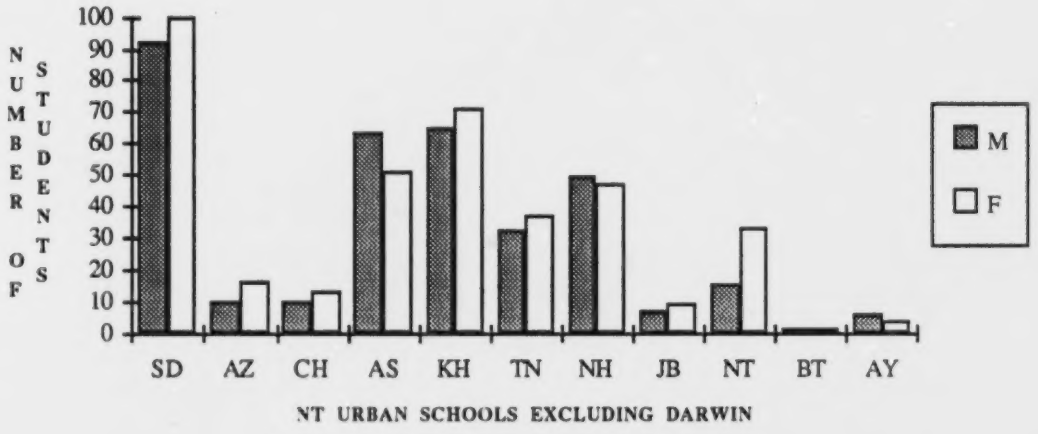
As might be expected, the majority of school leavers from urban schools in the Darwin area were from the high schools with Years 8 - 12, and Casuarina Secondary College. Only 10% of 1988 school leavers in the Darwin area were from high schools withYears 8 - 10.

TABLE 3 - URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (EXCLUDING DARWIN) 1988 (by school & gender)

GEN	SD	AZ	CH	AS	KH	TN	NH	JB	NT	BT	AY	TOT	%
M	92	10	10	63	65	32	49	7	15	1	6	350	48
F	100	16	13	51	71	37	47	9	33	1	4	382	52
TOT	192	26	23	114	136	69	96	16	48	2	10	732	100
%	26	4	3	16	19	9	13	2	7	0	1	100	

Alice Springs	AS	Jabiru Area	JB	Catholic High School	CH
Anzac Hill	AZ	Tennant Creek	TN	Sadadeen	SD
Alyangula Area	AY	Katherine	KH	NT Secondary Correspondence School	NT
Batchelor Area	BT	Nhulunbuy	NH		

FIGURE 2 - URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (EXCLUDING DARWIN) 1988 (by school & gender)



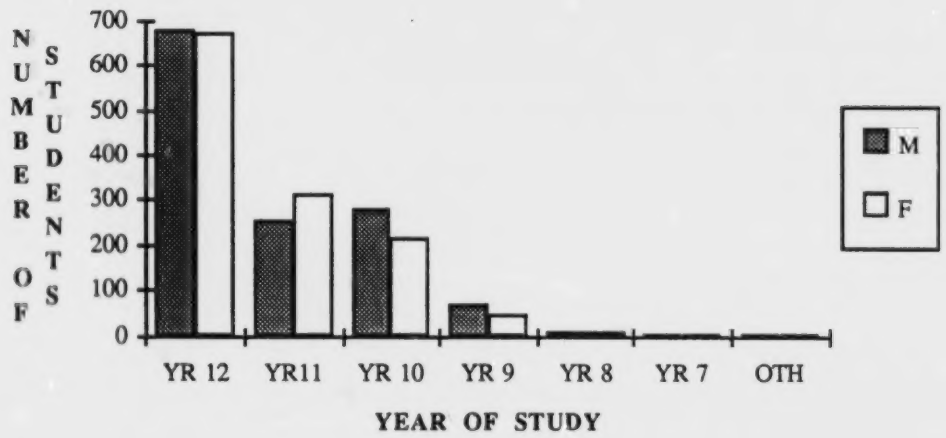
Forty-nine per cent of students leaving urban schools outside the Darwin area were from schools in Alice Springs.

It might be noted that Darwin urban school leavers formed 71% of the NT's school leaving population.

TABLE 4 - NT SCHOOL LEAVERS 1988 (by year & gender)

GEN	YR 12	YR 11	YR 10	YR 9	YR 8	YR 7	0TH	TOT
M	679	254	280	67	7	2	2	1291
F	675	313	216	49	10	1	4	1268
TOT	1354	567	496	116	17	3	6	2559
%	53	22	19	5	0.7	0.1	0.2	100

FIGURE 3 - NT SCHOOL LEAVERS 1988 (by year & gender)



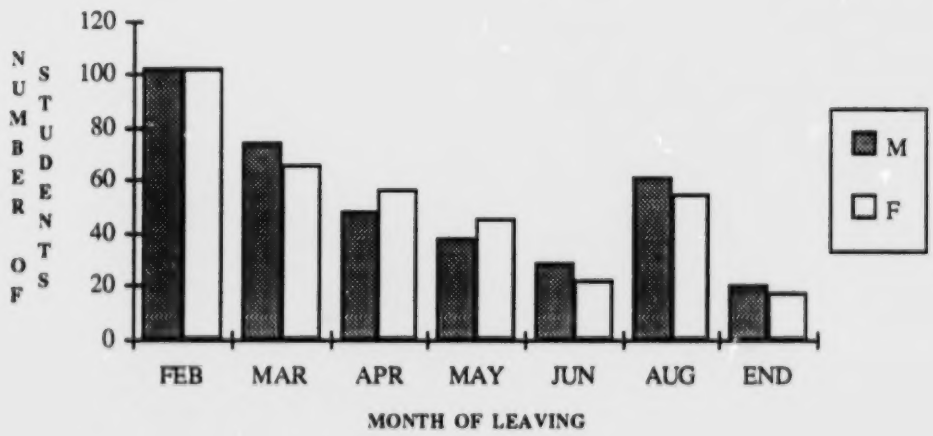
Fifty-three per cent of the 1988 NT school leaving population were students who were in or at the end of their Year 12 studies. Nineteen per cent of students left school during or at the end of Year 10, compared with 22% who left during or at the end of Year 11. Only 6% of students left school before Year 10.

TABLE 5 - NT STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING 1988 (by month & gender)

GEN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	AUG	*END	TOT
M	102	74	48	38	29	61	20	372
F	102	66	56	45	22	55	17	363
TOT	204	140	104	83	51	116	37	735
%	28	19	14	11	7	16	5	100

* END August- December

FIGURE 4 - NT STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING 1988 (by month and gender)



Not all students completed the academic year, as shown in Table 5. The figures for February may reflect a certain inaccuracy in the enrolment figures, in that schools may well have waited until February to take 'off roll' students failing to return after the Christmas vacation. Some of these students left school because their families had moved interstate. Both Katherine and Tennant Creek High Schools had a high turnover of students. Nonetheless, the figures seem to reflect some students' comments that they did not feel school had much to offer them and, therefore, looked for employment during the course of the year and left once they found work. Some students said that they had little choice in the matter of leaving school, since they had been asked to do so because of poor academic achievement. These generally had found it difficult to find work. The upsurge of school leavers in August would appear to be a result of successful job-seeking by such students during the July break. The trend for students to retain their options is also reflected in the numbers of 1988 students who enrolled for January 1989, but failed to return to school, see Table 6.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the number of students leaving school at the end of each holiday is high and that it declines steadily until the end of the semester, indicating, possibly, that many sought and took up employment during the vacations. The very large number of students failing to complete Year 12 could indicate an appropriate area for investigation.

TABLE 6 - NT STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED FOR JANUARY 1989 BUT WHO DID NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL (URBAN SCHOOLS)

	CS	DW	TM	DV	SN	SD	AZ	AS	KH	TN	NH	JB	TOT
M	39	56	13	0	0	32	1	8	13	10	17	0	189
F	30	35	5	1	1	20	0	4	10	6	10	1	123
TOT	69	91	18	1	1	52	1	12	23	16	27	1	312

Many students indicated their intention to return for the 1988 school year but failed to do so.

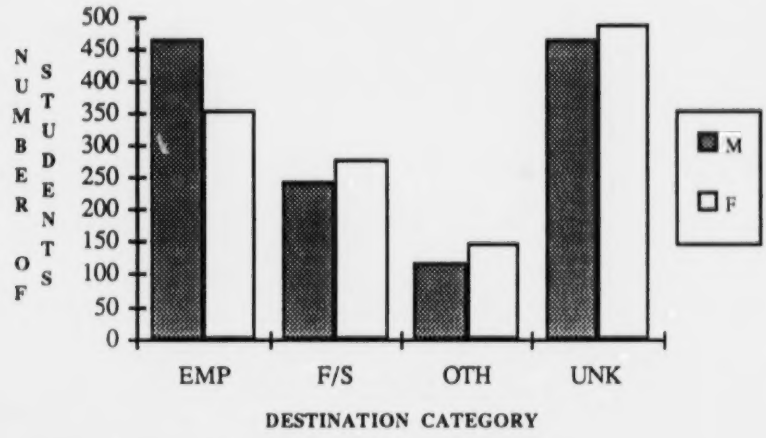
SCHOOL LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS

TABLE 7 - SCHOOL LEAVER POPULATION

	EMP	F/S	OTH	UNK	TOT
M	465	245	116	465	1291
F	356	277	148	487	1268
TOT	821	522	264	952	2559
%	32	21	10	37	100

EMP- Employment or occupation
OTH- Other categories
F/S - Further Study
UNK - Unknown

FIGURE 5 - SCHOOL LEAVER POPULATION



Employment was the prime destination for the majority of school leavers, with further study being the second most frequent destination. Students who were overseas, interstate, unemployed and seeking work, or unemployed through social reasons, e.g. pregnancy, marriage, are included in 'Other' (see p5).

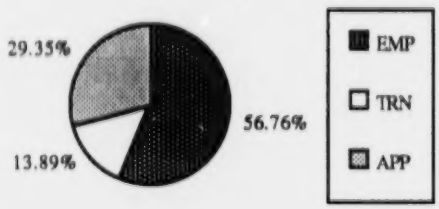
Employment Destinations

TABLE 8 - EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS

	EMP	TRN	APP	TOT
M	216	52	197	465
%	47	11	42	100
F	250	62	44	356
%	70	18	12	100
TOT	466	114	241	821
%	57	14	29	100

EMP - Full-time Employment
TRN - Traineeship
APP - Apprenticeship

FIGURE 6 - EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS



Over half of the school leavers who entered the employment market went into full-time work, with 29% taking up apprenticeships and a further 14% traineeships. Apprenticeships remained largely the domain of the male school leaver.

FIGURE 7 - MALE EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS

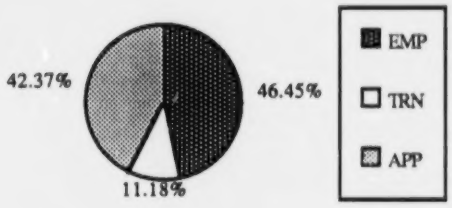
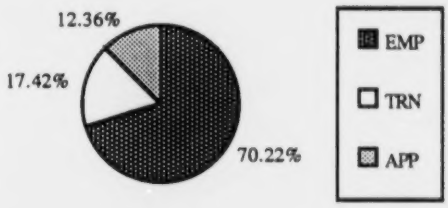


FIGURE 8 - FEMALE EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS



It will be noted from Figure 7 that 47% of male school leavers who entered the work force took up full-time employment compared with 46% who became apprentices. This is in sharp contrast with Figure 8 which shows that 70% of female school leavers entering the work force took up full-time employment compared with only 17% becoming apprentices. Eleven per cent of male school leavers entering the workforce took up traineeships, compared with 17% of female school leavers.

Employment Codes

These codes were derived from the Commonwealth Employment Service and are used by them to indicate employment areas. They have been used in this study to indicate employment areas of school leavers.

1000	Managerial	4000	Clerical, Sales, Service	7000	Transport
2000	Technology, Teaching	5000	Primary Industry	8000	Manual
3000	Arts, Sports etc	6000	Manufacturing	9000	Other

TABLE 9 - FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

GEN	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	TOT
M	3	2	102	22	30	18	20	19	216
%	2	1	47	10	14	8	9	9	100
F	0	17	207	3	9	6	0	8	250
%	0	7	83	1	4	2	0	3	100
TOT	3	19	309	25	39	24	20	27	466
%	1	4	67	5	8	5	4	6	100

Sixty-seven per cent of school leavers took up jobs in the Clerical, Sales, Service area. For both male and female school leavers, this was the most significant area of employment, but whereas 83% of female school leavers took up employment in this area, only 47% of male school leavers did so.

TABLE 10 - TRAINEESHIPS

GEN	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	TOT
M	0	1	5	1	5	12	0	28	52
F	0	2	20	0	2	1	0	37	62
TOT	0	3	25	1	7	13	0	65	114
%	0	3	22	1	6	11	0	57	100

While 22% of 1988 school leavers entering the work force took traineeships in Clerical, Sales, and Service industries, 58% were in the category 'miscellaneous'.

TABLE 11 - APPRENTICESHIPS

GEN	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	TOT
M	5	0	11	3	172	0	0	6	197
F	0	1	30	0	12	0	0	1	44
TOT	5	1	41	3	184	0	0	7	241
%	2	1	17	1	76	0	0	3	100

Seventy-six per cent of apprenticeships taken up were in the manufacturing industries. These were predominately the preserve of male school leavers. Female apprenticeships were mainly in hairdressing.

Further Education Destinations

TABLE 12 - FURTHER EDUCATION DESTINATIONS

	NTU	I/S	OTH	TOTAL
M	126	44	4	174
F	145	47	6	198
TOT	271	91	10	372
%	73	24	3	100

NTU - NT University inc ITAFE
I / S - Interstate institutions
OTH - Other institutions within NT

Seventy-two per cent of those school leavers identified as going on to further education went to the NT University. This may, however, reflect only those intending to take up places (see page 9) rather than those who did.

TABLE 13 - COURSES AT NTU

GEN	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	UNK	TOT
M	7	15	35	5	9	0	6	5	9	35	126
%	5	12	28	4	7	0	5	4	7	28	100
F	9	0	82	21	17	0	0	0	7	9	145
%	6	0	57	14	12	0	0	0	5	6	100
TOT	16	15	117	26	26	0	6	5	16	44	271
%	6	5	43	10	10	0	2	2	6	16	100

Forty-three per cent of school leavers, registering at the NT University, enrolled in Arts courses. Fifty-seven per cent of female school leavers who registered with the NTU enrolled in Arts courses, compared with 28% of male school leavers who attended such courses. Four per cent of male school leavers enrolling at the NTU registered for courses in Clerical, Sales and Service courses, compared with 14% of all female students.

TABLE 14 - COURSES AT OTHER TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE NT (Excluding Batchelor College)

GEN	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	UNK	TOT
M	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	4
F	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
TOT	2	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	10

Only ten of those school leavers for whom there is data registered for courses in other tertiary institutions in the NT.

TABLE 15 - COURSES AT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS INTERSTATE

GEN	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	UNK	TOT
M	13	5	10	4	1	0	0	0	0	12	45
F	13	0	17	1	0	0	0	0	5	10	46
TOT	26	5	27	5	1	0	0	0	5	22	91

Most school leavers for whom there is information and who went interstate to study enrolled in Managerial or Arts Courses.

TABLE 16 - STUDENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL

	NT	I/S	O/S	TOTAL
M	22	31	7	60
F	28	31	10	69
TOT	50	62	17	129
%	39	48	13	100

NT - Northern Territory
I/S - Interstate schools (Boarding)
0/S - Exchange students / return home

A number of 1988 students left NT schools either to continue their education interstate or overseas, while others worked for a short time before returning to NT schools. Because of database inaccuracies, (see p8), these were included in the original database of 1988 school leavers. Forty-eight per cent of NT school leavers returning to full-time education in a school environment went interstate, the majority of these were from Katherine, Tennant Creek or Nhulunbuy.

Other

TABLE 17 - OTHER

	I/S	O/S	H/L	SOC	TRL	U/E	OTH	TOT
M	41	10	0	17	0	45	3	116
F	40	9	0	31	19	48	1	148
TOT	81	19	0	48	19	93	4	264
%	31	7	0	18	7	35	2	100

I/S - Interstate
O/S - Overseas
H/L - Homeland
SOC - Social
TRL - Travel
U/E - Unemployed
OTH - Other

Of those school leavers who did not take up employment or continue their studies, 35% were unemployed, 31% went interstate and 18% were unemployed for reasons such as marriage, pregnancy, or serving a prison sentence.

Unknown

TABLE 18 - UNKNOWN

	N/P	POB	N/A	TOT
M	134	86	242	462
F	144	103	242	489
TOT	278	189	484	951
%	29	20	51	100

N/P - Phone not answered
POB - Post Office Box address only
N/A - No contact address

Twenty-nine per cent of those for whom there is no information were still listed at the address given on the database, but were not available by telephone at the time the researcher called. Twenty per cent were registered with post office box numbers, and it was not possible, therefore, to contact them within the constraints of the time available. Fifty-one per cent of those for whom there is no information were not at their registered address.

ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS

Information from the Aboriginal schools relates to 243 students in eleven schools.

TABLE 19 - TOTAL SURVEY POPULATION FROM PARTICIPATING ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS (by school and gender)

	BG	EL	HM	MA	ML	OP	OW	SX	TH	UM	YR	TOT
M	11	1	1	1	43	23	6	4	11	11	7	119
F	0	5	2	0	46	23	14	9	11	7	7	124
TOT	11	6	3	1	89	46	20	13	22	18	14	243
%	5	2	1	1	37	19	8	5	9	7	6	100

Oenpelli	OP	Milingimbi	ML	St Therese's	TH
Barunga	BG	Mt Allen	MA	Umbakumba	UM
Elliott	EL	OLSH Wadeye	OW	Yirrkala	YR
Hermansburg	HM	St Francis Xavier	SX		

Thirty-seven per cent of Aboriginal students of school leaving age, for whom information was received, were enrolled at Milingimbi and 19% were enrolled at Oenpelli.

TABLE 20 - STUDENTS REMAINING AT PARTICIPATING ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS (by school and gender)

	BG	EL	HM	MA	ML	OP	OW	SX	TH	UM	YR	TOT
M	0	0	0	0	18	10	1	3	2	0	0	34
F	0	1	0	0	20	10	1	8	1	0	0	41
TOT	0	1	0	0	38	20	2	11	3	0	0	75
%	0	1	0	0	51	27	2	15	4	0	0	100

Fifty-one per cent of Aboriginal students of school leaving age, for whom information was received and who chose to remain at school during 1988 were at Milingimbi, a further 27% remained at Oenpelli.

TABLE 21 - SCHOOL LEAVERS FROM PARTICIPATING ABORIGINAL SCHOOLS (by school and gender)

	BG	EL	HM	MA	ML	OP	OW	SX	TH	UM	YR	TOT
M	11	1	1	1	25	13	5	1	9	11	7	85
F	0	4	2	0	26	13	13	1	10	7	7	83
TOT	11	5	3	1	51	26	18	2	19	18	14	168
%	7	3	2	1	30	15	11	1	11	11	8	100

Thirty per cent of all Aboriginal school leavers, for which there is information, left from Milingimbi, while 15% were at Oenpelli.

TABLE 22 - ABORIGINAL SCHOOL LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS

	EMP	F/S	OTH	UNK	TOT
M	31	7	47	0	85
F	14	4	54	11	83
TOT	45	11	101	11	168
%	27	6.5	60	6.5	100

FIGURE 9 - ABORIGINAL SCHOOL LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS

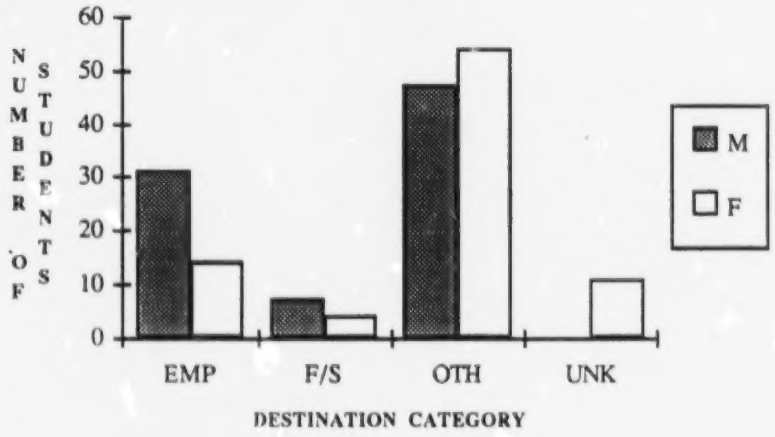


TABLE 23 - ABORIGINAL SCHOOL LEAVERS' EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS (by gender)

GEN	EMP	TRN	APP	CDEP	TOT
M	8	0	5	18	31
F	9	5	0	0	14
TOT	17	5	5	18	45
%	38	11	11	40	100

Forty per cent of Aboriginal school leavers were employed under CDEP (Community Development Employment Program), with a further 38% taking up full-time employment.

TABLE 24 - ABORIGINAL UNEMPLOYMENT, MOTHERHOOD AND MISCELLANEOUS

GEN	U/E	MOTH	OTHER	TOTAL
F	43	16	3	62
M	39	0	0	39
TOT	82	16	3	101
%	81	16	3	100

Eighty-one per cent of Aboriginal school leavers for whom there is information and who were not employed or in full-time further education were unemployed.

CONCLUSION

This study was intended to be an account of the educational or occupational destinations of 1988 school leavers. However, it was possible to find information relating to only 63% of all students leaving urban schools during or at the end of 1988, while it proved impossible to find a definitive figure for the number of school leavers from Aboriginal schools. This study shows only what students from the urban schools, for whom information was found, did immediately upon leaving school. The delay in starting the study enabled students who were contacted personally to provide a detailed account of their educational and occupational histories after leaving school. Often, their initial educational or occupational destination bore little or no relationship to what they subsequently went on to do. In many cases the initial job or course of study was a stepping stone or a period of transition to accomplish better things. With the limited data from Aboriginal schools, it is impossible to draw statistically valid conclusions. However teachers who provided information were of the opinion that it might be taken as reasonably representative of Aboriginal school leavers.

The NTU had already noted that numbers of students who enrolled for courses either did not attend or complete their courses. Likewise a number of students at tertiary institutions interstate had not completed their first year or did not return for further study.

A variety of reasons was given by students for not remaining in their first job or at a tertiary institution.

- Many had taken any job until such time as they found something more suited to their abilities, interests or qualifications.
- Some felt they had not really understood the requirements of the jobs, apprenticeships or further education courses which they had undertaken.
- Several had joined local firms on the promise of future manager traineeships, which did not materialise.
- Students studying interstate experienced problems relating to finance and lack of family support.

School Career Advisers and CES personnel made the following points.

- Those from outside Darwin complained of the limited horizons of many students and limited opportunities in their geographical area.
- There were opportunities of traineeships for males, while those for females were extremely limited.
- Parents often had unrealistic expectations for their children, which led to students attempting courses of study beyond their capabilities.

- Employers often sought inappropriately highly qualified students for occupations requiring limited skills[2].

- Students were not notified of results until January, which left those with inadequate grades insufficient time to make well-informed alternative choices.

- Some counsellors felt that more non-academic post-compulsory courses, with a possible link-up with TAFE courses would be advantageous in keeping the less academically inclined at school.

Although this might seem a depressing picture, it is not necessarily so. Some students deliberately took a year out before settling down. Two brothers went to work in an African Safari Park, others were setting up their own small enterprises, with one running his own cleaning agency. Many students, after an initial period of uncertainty, seemed to have found work suited to their taste and ability. Others realised that they had left school insufficiently qualified to enter the workforce, and were intending to return to school to complete their studies.

One way of extending and increasing the value of school leaver destination studies would be to conduct a longitudinal survey along the lines of ACER's 'Youth in Transition',[3] conducted under the auspices of Dr Trevor Williams where, beginning in 1978, the academic and career paths of a representative population of secondary school students were followed and recorded. A number of schools, both urban and Aboriginal, have stated their willingness to support such a project.

Areas of Possible Intervention

- A coordinated approach to informing students about jobs, careers, and further education, by schools, DEET and industry, with such information being made available to students well before Year 10, for example Katherine High School intended to begin education regarding career choices in Year 8.

- It has been clearly shown[4], that intervention is necessary to broaden students' attitudes and expectations, most especially those of girls. To this end a coordinated approach must be made across the spectrum of the curriculum.

- More training opportunities need to be established for girls. This has to be accompanied by a program to remedy the present difficulties females experience in non-traditional work environments.

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[2] The example of a plumber, who wanted a school leaver to act as an assistant in a very limited capacity. A suitable candidate was found. The employer then wanted to know what qualifications the student had in computer technology. The CES had considerable difficulty in explaining that someone with such qualifications would be unlikely to remain in the job for long.

[3] Williams T, Clancy T, Clancy J, Slater J, *Youth in Transition: a Longitudinal Study*, ACER 1978.

[4] Foster V, *Changing Voices*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1985.

Further Areas of Research

- A longitudinal study into student educational and occupational destinations.
- An investigation as to why students choose to leave mid year, rather than stay to complete their studies.
- An investigation into the drop-out rate at tertiary institutions.
- The impact and implications for the education system of the high level of mobility within the NT and the large short-term and long-term transient population.